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Bonneville County - Idaho

Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan

Executive Summary And Action Plan

November 19, 2004

Executive Summary and Action Plan

The mission of the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Program is to promote public policy designed to protect citizens, critical facilities, infrastructure, private property, and the environment from wildfires. The Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan, developed as a foundational element of the Program, addresses privately held unincorporated urban and rural areas of the county and their interface points with Federal or State Lands such as the Caribou Targhee National Forest or the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

This Plan establishes an action plan for mitigating the impacts associated with wildfires. If implemented over the next several years, the actions identified in this plan will help reduce the damages caused by wildfire in the wildland/urban interface. However, it is up to the community to ensure that these actions are taken. All mitigation is local, and the primary responsibility for development and implementation of risk reduction strategies and policies lies with the identified local and federal jurisdictions. No plan is complete until it is implemented.

The county wildland/urban interface areas were all assessed during the summer of 2004. Based on the findings of the assessment, the assessment team geographically organized eight (8) areas of risk or vulnerability zones; then ranked them according to four criteria; Life Safety, Property Damage, Environmental Damage, and Economic Impact. The listing of the respective zones, and the identified mitigation implementing actions presented below, represent a summary of the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Mitigation Program Action Plan.

WUI Zone 1 – Hoffman Estates/McCoy Creek Road Area – High Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.
- ✓ Apply for grants to procure equipment used for mechanical treatment projects.
- ✓ Develop a static water source.
- ✓ Develop an evacuation plan.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Improve the Forest Service road into Hoffman Estates

WUI Zone 2—North side of Palisades Reservoir from Wyoming Line to Indian Creek – High Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Improve roadways and develop evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.
- ✓ Apply for grants to procure equipment used for mechanical treatment projects.
- ✓ Develop a static water source.

Long Term Actions:

None

WUI Zone 3 – North side of Palisades Reservoir from Indian Creek Road to Swan Valley Fire District Boundary – High Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Improve roadways and develop evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.
- ✓ Apply for grants to procure equipment used for mechanical treatment projects.
- ✓ Develop a static water source.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Expand the Swan Valley Fire District to cover this area.

WUI Zone 4 – Southwest side of Palisades Reservoir including Calamity and Palisades Summer Home Areas – High Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Improve roadways and develop evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.
- ✓ Apply for grants to procure equipment used for mechanical treatment projects.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Expand the Swan Valley Fire District to cover this area.

WUI Zone 5 – South side of Snake River from the Palisades Dam to Fall Creek Road including the Little Lemhi Scout Camp and Ta-Man-A-Wis Scout Camp – High Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Work with the Bureau of Reclamation to reopen the road below the Palisades Dam for emergency vehicles.
- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Improve roadways and develop evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.
- ✓ Apply for grants to procure equipment used for mechanical treatment projects.
- ✓ Develop a static water source.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Reduce Swan Valley Fire Department response times by constructing a bridge across the Snake River at Irwin, Idaho.
- ✓ Build a substation for the Swan Valley Fire District to cover areas on the south side of the Snake River.
- ✓ Expand the boundaries of the Swan Valley Fire District to include areas on the south side of the Snake River.

WUI Zone 6 – Kelly Island riparian area between the north side of the Snake River and the Heise Road – Medium Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Improve roadways and develop evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.

Long Term Actions:

None

WUI Zone 7 – The CRP intermix on the east bench of the county west of Bone Road – From the Ririe Reservoir to the southern County boundary – Medium Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Expand the boundary of the Bonneville County #1 Fire District to include unprotected areas.
- ✓ Working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, develop mitigation measures for CRP grounds in the Bone area.

WUI Zone 8 – The west end of the county from the west boundary of the City of Idaho Falls to the INEEL boundary – Medium Risk

Short Term Actions:

- ✓ Develop a wildland/urban interface public education program.
- ✓ Develop a fuels reduction program.

Long Term Actions:

- ✓ Expand the boundary of the Bonneville Fire District #1 to include unprotected areas west of Idaho Falls to the INEEL boundary.

An economic analysis was conducted on all mitigation projects identified above. The analysis provides a foundation for the Bonneville County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Group and the responsible fire districts to begin mitigation project prioritization. While some projects provide an excellent return on investment other factors must be closely examined in the prioritization process. Life safety issues must always take precedence over costs.